

Apricot Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Isobel Randall

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Apricot Day Nursery is owned and managed by Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Limited. It has been operating since 1991 and is located in a purpose built building in the grounds of Longsands College, St Neots, Cambridgeshire. Children have access to four group rooms and several enclosed outdoor play areas. Opening times are from 7.30am to 6.30pm each weekday all year round with the exception of bank holidays and one week at Christmas. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 47 children aged from birth to five years may attend the setting at any one time.

There are currently 49 children on roll, including 14 three and four year olds eligible for early years funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting provides for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and has good access for adults and children with disabilities.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff and a nursery cook. Eight members of staff have appropriate early years qualifications to at least level two and seven are qualified to level three or above. Ten members of staff are currently working towards improving their qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The provision at Apricot Day Care Nursery is outstanding. The children are making excellent progress in their learning. They are enthusiastic, eager and motivated learners who are settled and secure at the setting. The manager constantly reviews the provision, acting promptly to achieve improvement, so that capacity to improve further is outstanding. The extent to which the setting meets the needs of all of the children is excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- making more flexible and effective use of outdoor play areas so that children can choose from a wider range of activities to promote learning and enjoyment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is exceptionally safe and secure. The recruitment process ensures that adults are completely suitable to work with children. Boundaries around the

perimeter are safe, as are the divisions between rooms for children of different ages. Risk assessments are excellent, with regular checks before all relevant activities. All adults are fully trained in child protection and systems in place for expressing concerns are clear. In addition, all staff are qualified to administer first aid to children. Fully involved in the formation of policy and in planning to meet the children's needs, they are regularly required to prove their awareness of policies and practices impacting on the children. The setting encourages all to develop their expertise through training, so that almost all are pursuing higher qualifications.

Outstanding leadership and management have an excellent impact on the children's welfare, learning and development through robust self evaluation systems which embed ambition and drive improvement. The recommendations raised at the previous inspection were promptly addressed in full. Adults are now made fully aware of strict hygiene practices by having to record their actions. Planning for children's independent and sustained play has been completely revised to place greatest emphasis on their personal preferences and interests so that their enjoyment and involvement is strong. Recently monitored within the local authority quality assurance scheme, the setting was judged to have met all but a very few of their criteria. Space is managed exceptionally well and the setting is highly resourced with an excellent range of books and equipment suitable for children at all ages. The outdoor spaces are very well equipped with safe surfaces and a good range of climbing and riding toys to encourage physical development. However, the divisions between the spaces and their position around the building make it difficult to maintain ratios of children to adults in all of the indoor and outdoor areas, which limit children's ability to freely explore all learning opportunities. The manager works closely with local authority agencies to address the different needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Parents value the quality and approachable nature of the nursery. They state that their children enjoy coming and have benefited from their experiences there. They feel exceptionally well informed as a result of daily meetings when they leave and collect their children, during which they see the records of the daily activities and responses. Communication is exemplary, as parents inform the nursery about their children's preferences, experiences, habits and medical needs and receive regular written reports and newsletters. The nursery welcomes parents, holds open days, parents evenings and meetings at which parents are invited to express their views. Parents praise the success of the nursery in settling children on arrival to the setting or when moving into a higher age group. Children are securely settled in at the local primary school because of efficient partnership arrangements that ease them in gradually. The needs of all of the children are fully addressed through the planning approach that focuses on not only the standards but also on the interests of individual children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Provision for the needs of the children is outstanding. Excellent learning and enjoyment arise out of meticulous attention to the needs of individuals. Key persons assigned to children full time know their individual preferences and habits, noting their observations in detail, transferring their significance to assessment checklists and acting on them in plans that move the children on. By this means, gaps in the children's progress are quickly identified and addressed. The nursery has moved away from a topic approach to allow adults to plan in the light of individual interests and experiences. For example, a child's attendance at a Dutch family wedding was celebrated by having a visit from the local vicar who was involved in a role play of a wedding, with comparisons then drawn between the experiences in Holland and England. While taking opportunities as they arise, adults nevertheless promote all aspects of Early Years Foundation Stage. Every child has clear encouragement to pursue their interests.

Children with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored so that their needs are met in order to help them to progress. Children are very confident, knowing the routines of the nursery and having their own preferences addressed. Children feeling safe in this nurturing environment and are welcoming to visitors. Provision for their health is outstanding. They learn quickly that they have to be hygienic and to behave safely. Children wash their hands thoroughly under supervision after messy play, going to the toilet and before eating. Their food, freshly prepared by the nursery cook, has won the organisation a Healthy Eating Award. Although, children do not have continuous access to outdoor areas, they do go out during every session and have very good opportunities for physical play.

Younger children are encouraged to sleep at specific times, but are given freedom to do so at any time. Babies are introduced to music, to speaking and listening and to picture books, while being encouraged to explore the sounds, textures and colours of their environment. Development of skills for the future is exceptionally well planned and implemented. As children progress through the different age groups they learn to recognise their written names and begin to reproduce them, for example, to record that they have gone outdoors. Adults provide excellent opportunities for children to contribute to the routines of the nursery. All of the three-year-old children clear away their left over food, after which some of them enjoy helping to wipe tables, sweep and mop the floor. Learning to share and collaborate, they enjoy role play. They are encouraged to learn to dress themselves and to count, for example, the number of children present. Three-year-olds listening to a story have learned to count up to three, to comment on the story and to make suggestions about what will happen next. They enjoy talking to visitors and showing their achievements. Those who have recently joined have settled exceptionally well and enjoy playing with the others.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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